

System and District

u3a

learn, laugh, live

MAR
2023

Vitality!

Official newsletter of the System and District u3a

CHARITY No 1180152

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Hi Everyone,

Isn't nice to see the first signs of Spring. Bulbs are starting to poke their heads through the soil and snowdrops are coming into bloom.

We are quickly moving towards the AGM where several of the committee will have to relinquish their posts in line with the Constitution. Could I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to them for all their hard work and dedication. The positions we have vacant are Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chair and Committee Member. It is imperative that we fill these positions for our u3a to continue. We cannot afford for our u3a to close because in the word of Joni Mitchell's song Big Yellow Taxi "you don't know what you've got till it's gone". At our last Members Meeting, Elaine who organised our Theatre Trips is standing down and I would like to thank her very much for all the wonderful shows I have seen. If anyone or a group of members would like to organise events, then we would be very pleased to hear from you. If you are interested in any of the vacancies and wish to know more then please drop me a line at sadu3achair@gmail.com or come and see me at our next Members Meeting.

I don't think I will tell my about our next meeting when Ann Featherstone's talk entitled "I will polish him off" - the curious tale of Sweeney Todd. It might be detrimental to my health.

See you soon.

Clive

WE WANT TO LET YOU KNOW

OPEN DAY - DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Plans for our Open Day on April 26th at the Grosvenor (same venue as the last Open Day) are moving along. A goodly proportion of groups will be showcasing their activities.

We are planning to have posters up in the surrounding area and will be looking for some help in getting these displayed nearer the time.

It will be an opportunity to get existing members involved with groups they don't currently attend, and vitally, to attract new members. Sadly, because of our age demographic, we are bound to lose existing members. Some become too ill, or take on caring responsibilities that prevent them from getting out and about. If we are to maintain our existing membership numbers, let alone grow, we need new people to join us.

Past Open Days have proved very successful in boosting our numbers, so please put the date in your diary.

PLEA FROM YOUR EDITOR

Whilst the content of the Newsletter comes from a variety of sources, contributions from members are important. I'd like to be sharing details of what groups have been doing, and have articles, photos and other items from members. However, to do that, I need members to provide such material. Input from you over the last couple of months has been low.

Group information doesn't have to come exclusively from group organisers. If you can tell others about a group you attend, just liaise with your group organiser to avoid duplication.

If there is something you've come across that might benefit others, or be of interest, don't keep it to yourself, let me let others know about it. Don't worry about spelling or whether the wording is spot on, as editor I can tidy things like that up. If I feel there's a problem over publishing, I will let you know. If I'd like to make significant amendments, I'll consult you beforehand and get your agreement.

Come on, don't be shy, share!

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP - EARLY BRITISH HISTORY

We hope to start a new Group - a Group dealing with the period leading up to the start of the British History Group in 1600, which was led by Pat Wherton. By way of introduction to the period, I offer the following outline.

The Roman Conquest was in the 1st Century AD. One of the best observers of tribes of Britain was Tacitus, who wrote on historical Celtic events. Another was Roman geographer Ptolemy, who wrote a description of British tribes.

In all there were 18 tribes covering England and Wales, with more in Scotland.

One large tribe, Corieltauvi, was created only shortly before the Roman Conquest of Britain, combining groups of people living in what is today most of the East Midlands. It offered no resistance to the Romans and was quickly turned into a civitas (an administrative district equivalent to a modern county) with its capital at the city of Leicester.

The Corieltauvi are known from their coins found throughout the East Midlands, and Leicester was certainly an important large settlement before the Roman Conquest.

Much has been written about the Iceni, who led the most successful revolt against Roman rule, and Queen Boudicca. Another tribe was the Trinuvantes, which was the first tribe to be mentioned by a Roman author, appearing in Caesar's account of his invasion of 54 BC. The capital of this civitas was Colchester, which was originally founded as a colony for retired Roman soldiers, and we know that this colony, with its soldiers, was destroyed by Queen Boudicca in retaliation for the murder of her husband King Prasutagus.

There is much more to learn about these two and the other tribes.

When the Roman Empire left these shores, Britain fell into ruin. Grand cities and luxurious villas were deserted and left to crumble, and civil society collapsed into chaos. Into this violent and unstable world came foreign invaders who established themselves as its new masters.

If you are interested in possibly joining this Group, please let me know:

Norma Grimes email: norma.grimes@btinternet

LINE DANCING GROUP

I am reluctantly suspending the line dancing group, due to Jackie our instructor being incapacitated to dance for the foreseeable future. I have tried without success to find a replacement.

Chris Ringrose.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

In January, we decided to meet indoors at the Syston Community Centre for a workshop on 'miniature figures'. This gave time for all to experiment with their cameras, ask questions and give guidance to those that required it. It was great fun and we came up with some very creative images. A few are included here.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits were enjoyed during the session!

Next time, weather permitting, we hope to visit Bradgate Park.



Next page an example produced by Candice Barker(top) and another from Christine Burne (bottom)



FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

More and more scans of original family history related documents have been made available online. A few years ago, genealogists had to make do with transcripts, unless they could travel to the archives where the originals were held to look at them. We looked at the difference seeing the original document, or a scan of it, can make to our knowledge.

Transcripts are useful, but they don't always include all of the details from the original document. So for example, Michael Butler lost his wife then married again. His second wife Mary had 3 children baptised before she married him. The transcript of the baptism register indicated that she was unmarried at the time, as it only showed her name. But, the actual register had a note on each baptism that Michael Butler was the reputed father. The couple had another 8 children after they married. Michael had already fathered 11 children with his first wife, making 22 in total! This is by no means an isolated example, if a widower married a lady several years his junior (in this case Mary was over 20 years younger than Michael), he would end up siring more children before his new wife hit the menopause.

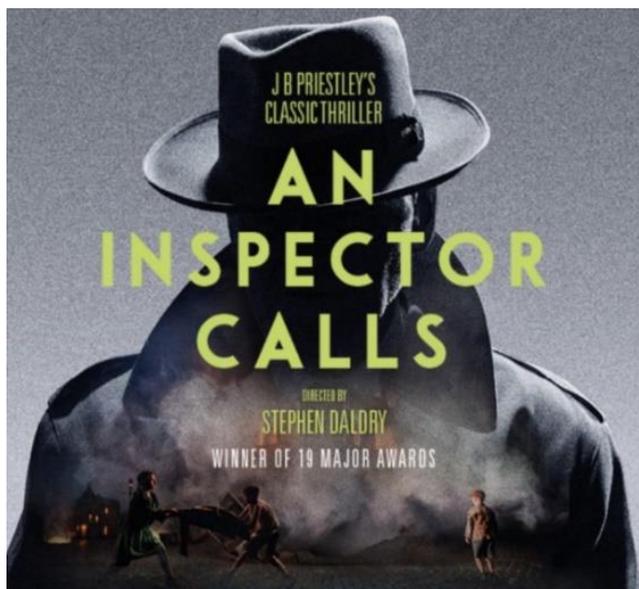
Marriage transcripts can be limited to just the names of the bride and groom, and the date and place they married. If the marriage took place late 1837 onwards there is quite a lot more information to be found in the marriage register, or on the marriage certificate (both should in theory be the same). *See the example below*

1877. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of <u>Thurgarton</u> in the County of <u>Leicestershire</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
105	Nov ^r 26 th 1877	William Marson	22	Widower	Labourer	Hill Thurgarton	George Marson	Labourer
		Harriet Bell	25	Spinster	—	Hill Thurgarton	George Bell	F. Labourer
Married in the <u>Parish Church</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Established Church of England</u> by me, <u>H. Thompson Bell</u> Curate in Charge								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>William Marson</u> <u>Harriet Bell</u>		In the Presence of us,		<u>George Bell his X mark</u> <u>Wm. Marson her X mark</u> (H.M.)		

In this case the transcript didn't contain the information that William Marson was a widower, nor did it show his recorded age. He was actually 20 not 22, so it was something of a surprise to find that this was his second marriage. His first was in 1874 when he was only 17. Further research led to the discovery that there was a son from that first marriage, who was brought up by his maternal grandparents.

Burial entries may provide more than just a name and date, but the transcript may be limited to just those details. It was common for children to be named after parents and grandparents, so there could be 3, or sometimes 4 generations, all alive at the same time, in the same place, with the same name. If the register includes ages, and/or parents or spouses names, or the fact that a lady is a widow, those details may resolve which Robert Brown or Mary Hall was buried on which date.

THEATRE TRIPS



Stephen Daldry's multi award-winning **National Theatre** production of **JB Priestley's** classic thriller returns.

This is on 25th March 2023.

There is just an outside chance that a ticket might become available due to unforeseen circumstances. Please let Elaine know if you would be interested. elaineyarwood@outlook.com

This is the last trip to be organised by Elaine Yarwood. Many thanks to her for all her hard work over recent years in organising them.

If we are to continue to have these trips, it needs someone, or a small group of members, to take over from Elaine. If everyone sits back and hopes someone else will do it, no one will.

LAST MONTH'S GM

Sadly I had to miss the February talk on climate change. But interestingly I received information on Charnwood's draft strategy for tackling this issue, together with an invite to Charnwood residents to give their views.

Have a say on the draft Climate Change Strategy 2023-30



According to Government figures, in 2019 the emissions in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalent (ktCO₂e) for Charnwood were caused by:

- Transport 35%
- Domestic 27%
- Industry 16%
- Waste management 7%
- Agriculture 6%
- Commercial 5%
- Public Sector Buildings 4% (e.g. schools/hospitals)
- Other land use including woodland -1%

Compared with other local district authorities, the borough produces fewer emissions per person than most areas. On the next page there are links to the strategy and to having a say on the matter.

[Charnwood Borough Council draft Climate Change Strategy 2023-30](#) (PDF Document, 1.25 Mb)

[Charnwood Borough Council draft Climate Change Strategy 2023-30 Action Plan](#) (PDF Document, 0.7 Mb)

[Have a say on the draft Climate Change Strategy 2023-30](#)

NATIONAL U3A ITEMS

U3A TALKS



For the Love of a Woman

Join Catherine Stevenson, Newcastle u3a, for this talk looking at a dynamic and powerful painting by William Holman Hunt.

Thurs 9 March at 10am

Free – online via zoom



Life on the Edge: The dawn of quantum biology, with Jim Al-Khalili

Join Jim Al-Khalili CBE FRS, Professor of Physics at the University of Surrey, and one of Britain's best-known science communicators.

Friday 17 Mar at 12pm to 1pm

Free – Online via Zoom



The Joe Lyons Story – Food for Thought

Join Neville Lyons to look at the Lyons Teashops, the Corner House Restaurants and the Nippy waitresses – all part of social history.

Thursday 23 March at 2pm

Free – online via zoom

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

Book [here](#)

To mark the forthcoming Coronation

Following a wonderful suggestion from a member on how to mark the forthcoming Coronation in May – we are launching a new initiative – 'Cook for the King'

We would like you to create a dish that celebrates and reflects Britain in 2023.

We would love the u3a movement to find the dish of the 2023 Coronation – one to become as famous as Coronation Chicken.

There are no hard and fast rules – be creative – but please consider the guidelines and themes below.



You can find out more about this event [here](#)

FORMER PRISONER OF WAR LEARNS GERMAN WITH THE u3a

Glenfield u3a member Richard, who was shot down over Belgium in World War II, has told how the u3a movement has been a “lifeline” for him.

Richard Whateley-Knight, who joined Glenfield u3a in Leicestershire when he was 92 with his late wife Joan, became a member of several interest groups, including German speaking.

Richard, who recently turned 100, says, “My desire with joining the German interest group was to understand the language and the people, after my experience.”

He added “The u3a is a lifeline for me. I can’t emphasise enough how important it has been for my wellbeing.”

Newlywed Richard was part of No 613 Squadron, which was tasked with low-level night flying to destroy trains, tanks and buildings around St Vith in the Battle of the Bulge.

On Christmas Eve, 1944, the de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito which he was navigating was intercepted by a Luftwaffe Junker Ju 88 – which Richard described with characteristic understatement as “very bad timing.”

A burst of fire penetrated the cockpit, injuring Richard’s legs and shredding the controls. Richard and pilot Ken Baird bailed out and landed safely, but Richard was picked up by a German patrol and taken to various prison camps.

Finally, he was released by Allied forces at Moosburg. Richard revealed that living in the camps was mostly boring but sometimes he worked in the kitchen or hospital. The camp inmates were aware the war was coming to an end and he didn’t encounter any violence.

Richard is part of the Caterpillar Club, an informal association of people whose lives have been saved through the use of a parachute to bail out of a disabled aircraft. He was also awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honour, the highest French order of merit for military and civilians, in 2018.

An avid cricket fan and player, he was a member of the Local Umpires Association for 34 years and was awarded life membership of the England and Wales Cricket Board’s Association of Cricket Officials.

Richard also belongs to the u3a gardening and history groups but describes the Glenfield u3a luncheon group as the most fun.

His recent 100th birthday was celebrated by his u3a friends with a cake and a speech by Richard. He said: “The reason I enjoy u3a so much is the extreme level of friendliness and cooperation within the movement.

“Since I reached my current age, help from other members has been instantaneous. No matter which groups I’ve been in there’s been support available. If there’s some tricky steps on a garden visit, there’s always a helping hand.

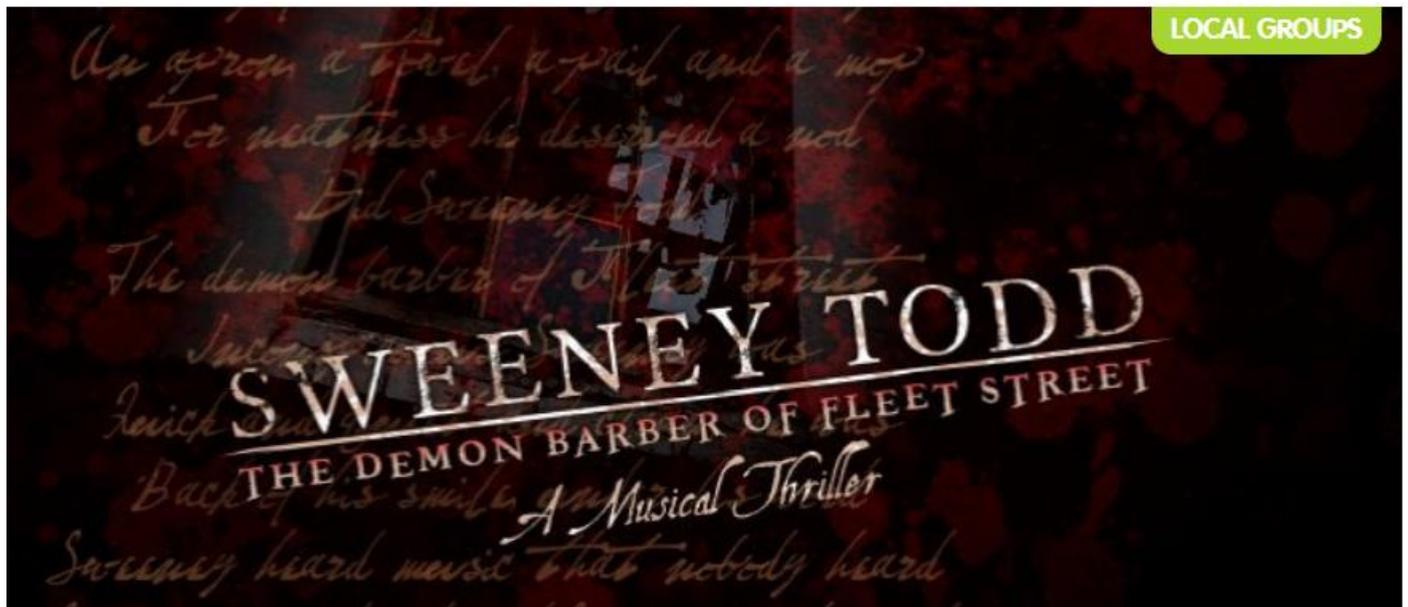
“There’s a desire within u3a to make new people feel at home.”

This appeared as part of a larger article in the Leicester Mercury but has also featured elsewhere, including the Third Age Trust or National u3a website.

NETWORK NEWS ITEMS

There has been no Network News published this month so nothing to report.

NOT u3a BUT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED



This dovetails neatly with our March GM talk –

7th March – 11th March book your tickets [here](#)

Special offer for the Saturday Matinee one half-price child ticket for each adult ticket.

Considered one of Sondheim’s most perfect scores and one of the darkest musicals ever written, Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street is the tale of a revenge driven barber. Todd returns to Victorian London after years of exile to avenge Lucy, his wife, by seeking out the lecherous judge who ruined their lives. When thwarted, Sweeney loses his mind, murdering as many people as he can, while his associate Mrs. Lovett bakes the bodies into pies and sells them to her unsuspecting customers.

Sweeney Todd is full of soaring beauty, pitch-black comedy and stunning terror. A bloody, worldwide success - tasty, thrilling and theatrical. Sweeney has simultaneously shocked, awed and delighted audiences across the world.

[Medieval and Tudor entertainments in Leicester](#)



Sponsored by De Montfort University

Professor Katie Normington joined De Montfort University as Vice-Chancellor in 2021 from Royal Holloway, University of London, where she was Deputy Principal (Academic). She is a Professor of Drama. Her research focuses on theatre history – in particular, medieval English drama and contemporary theatre practice. She has published six books in these areas.

Summary: The late medieval and early Tudor world was one where entertainment played a key role. This was also the case in Leicester where the Guildhall hosted visits by over 56 acting companies in the 16th century, including one which was associated with Shakespeare, meaning it was likely he visited Leicester. But the late medieval world saw a host of entertainment from formal drama to informal parades, feasts, public punishment rituals. This talk will outline the range of performances that occurred in late medieval Leicester and the function that it served for citizens.

Attending the lecture: This event is open to both members and non-members of the Leicester Literary & Philosophical Society to attend in person. The event will also be streamed using Zoom.

Members: Members will receive an email about a week before the event providing them with the information required to listen to the lecture using Zoom.

Non-members: Non-members may attend either on Zoom or in-person on payment of £5 (student non-members £3) by booking through EventBrite:

Zoom: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/409273908277>

In-person: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/463705735337>

HARLAXTON MANOR – SPRING/EASTER OPEN HOUSE



Harlaxton Manor is over the border in Lincolnshire near Grantham, it is only open on limited days each year as it serves as a UK campus for an American University.

Friday, 7th April and Saturday, 8th April 2023

Easter is a wonderful time to experience the incredible beauty of Harlaxton Manor and its magnificent gardens and we're very excited to be hosting a special bank holiday weekend of family-friendly activities for the occasion.

Everyone can enjoy the Gregory Goose and Friends Golden Easter Egg Hunt and join in traditional garden games as they explore the magnificent manor and gardens. There'll also be a drawing room for children, picnic benches, a pianist as well as a selection of hot and cold refreshments available, including ice cream.

Visitors might even spot the Easter Bunny hopping about! You'll even have the chance to meet some of our students and staff who love talking about the history and their experiences at Harlaxton.

To book tickets in advance please click the link below. Alternatively, a limited number of tickets will be available to purchase on arrival at the Manors main entrance.

<https://events.harlaxton.co.uk/>

FROM OUR MEMBERS

PANCAKE DAY

Many of us may have observed "Pancake Day" or "Shrove Tuesday" a few days ago. But why? Where does this tradition come from. I had some idea, but looked for a bit more information.

The tradition of marking the start of Lent has been documented for centuries. Ælfric of Eynsham's "Ecclesiastical Institutes" from around 1000 AD states: "In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him as he then may hear by his deeds what he is to do [in the way of penance]". By the time of the late Middle Ages, the celebration of Shrovetide lasted until the start of Lent. It was traditional in many societies to eat pancakes or other foods made with the butter, eggs and fat or lard that would need to be used up before the beginning of Lent. The specific custom of British Christians eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday dates to the 16th century. Along with its emphasis on feasting, another theme of Shrove Tuesday involves Christians repenting of their sins in preparation to begin the season of Lent in the Christian liturgical calendar. In many Christian parish churches, a popular Shrove Tuesday tradition is the ringing of the church bells (on this day, the toll is known as the Shriving Bell) "to call the faithful to confession before the solemn season of Lent" and for people to "begin frying their pancakes"

Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast. Pancakes are the perfect way of using up these ingredients.

The pancake has a very long history and featured in cookery books as far back as 1439. The tradition of tossing or flipping them is almost as old: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne." (Pasquil's Palin, 1619).

The ingredients for pancakes can be seen to symbolise four points of significance at this time of year:

Eggs ~ Creation

Flour ~ The staff of life

Salt ~ Wholesomeness

Milk ~ Purity

In the UK, pancake races form an important part of the Shrove Tuesday celebrations – an opportunity for large numbers of people, often in fancy dress, to race down streets tossing pancakes. The object of the race is to get to the finishing line first, carrying a frying pan with a cooked pancake in it and flipping the pancake as you run.



The most famous pancake race takes place at Olney in Buckinghamshire. According to tradition, in 1445 a woman of Olney heard the shroving bell while she was making pancakes and ran to the church in her apron, still clutching her frying pan. The Olney pancake race is now world famous. Competitors have to be local housewives and they must wear an apron and a hat or scarf.

DECLUTTER DEN

Do you have anything sitting in a cupboard, or on a shelf, that you no longer want? Might one of our groups be able to use it? Might one of your fellow members be able to use it? Do you have an older item that's been upgraded by a Christmas present and so is now redundant but still useable.

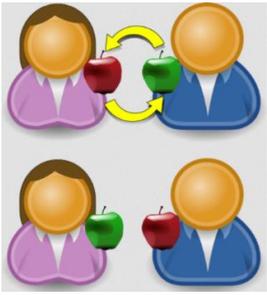
Brian King says – “we have 3 wheelie suitcases to pass on to anyone who wants one or more, free of charge, well used (New Zealand twice, Canada, plus umpteen more local trips) still in good condition, robust, but no longer needed.”

He can be contacted on 0116 2120 188



If you have something that you are prepared to give away – **strictly no items for sale!** Let me know and I'll put it in declutter den and hopefully we can help each other free up some space, whilst giving others something they have a use for, even if we don't. Email: sadu3aed@gmail.com

SWAP STOP



Maybe you don't have something you are willing to give away, but how about swapping it with something from another member?

Are you a jig-saw fan looking to exchange with another jig-saw fan and give both of you a new challenge?

Do you have books you've read and would like to swap some with another bookworm?

Let me have details of what you have and what you want and we'll try and connect you with another member who wants what you have and has what you want. The usual email address applies.

POETRY CORNER

Continuing the pancake theme -

NATIONAL PANCAKE DAY

Ah, pancakes, hot off the griddle--
Buttermilk pancakes, oozing with butter
And drowning in gooey maple syrup.
Oh, my goodness! My heart's all aflutter.

Forget the eggs, bacon, and sausage;
Let the flapjacks fill my plate.
I intend to savor every
Delicious bite to celebrate.

Got blueberries? Get them out.
Stir them into the sumptuous batter.
Serve the cakes for breakfast, lunch,
Or even dinner; it doesn't matter.

A few carbs, a little sugar...
I don't care. What the hay?
I'm enjoying a piece of heaven.
Happy National Pancake Day!

TASTY TREATS

Four ounces of flour, an egg and some milk,
Start whisking, then frying, then ooo ...
The mixture's so simple, the outcome sublime --
A pancake is born out of goo.
It's served on a plate with some syrup or juice
And all of your taste-buds are let on the loose.

SING A SONG OF PANCAKES

Sing a song of pancakes,
Sizzling in the pan;
One for Jack and Alice,
One for me and Ann.

Jack has tossed his pancake,
Aren't we having fun?
Ann is watching closely,
Hers is nearly done.

Alice stirs the batter,
With the wooden spoon,
Laughs to think her pancake
Will be sizzling soon.

There'll be sugar on them,
Nurse puts quite a lot.
When my pancake's finished
I shall eat it hot.

Sing a song of pancakes,
Sizzling in the pan,
One for Jack and Alice,
One for me and Ann.

'Lensharding' or 'Shroving' was the Lenten version of Christmas carolling and little more than begging with menaces. Most Shroving adventures were accompanied by singing this threat:

*Please I've come a-shroving
For a piece of pancake
Or a little ruckle cheese
Of your own making.
If you don't give me some,
If you don't give me none,
I'll knock down your door
With a great marrow bone
And away I'll run.*

Disorderly, Shrovetide football involving whole towns, were common throughout England. In Derby the 1839 game was so unruly it had to be ended by the intervention of the army:

*Pancakes and Fritters say the Bells of St. Peter's
When will the ball come? Say the bells of St Alkmun,
At two they will throw, says St Werabo,*

And finally.....

Shrove Tuesday is not celebrated in the same way world wide – here are some traditions from other countries or regions –

On the last Sunday before Lent, Danish toy stores and bakery windows fill with toy cats, wooden barrels and copious amounts of freshly baked buns. The golden buns ooze with an assortment of sweet fillings including whipped cream, strawberry jam and melted milk chocolate. Why you may wonder? That's because it's Fastenlavn – Denmark's version of pancake day!

Uzgavenes is a popular Lithuanian festival which literally translates to 'the time before Lent'. Surprisingly enough, the festival takes place on Shrove Tuesday, the day before the great fast begins on Ash Wednesday. The festival is a time of celebration full of humour, pranks, superstitions and plenty of food, and is often celebrated in public squares, large parks and family homes so that everyone can get involved. Indulging in potato pancakes, doughnuts and boiled pork is also part of the festival fun. In fact, Lithuanian's are encouraged to eat at least 12 meals during Shrove Tuesday, in preparation for the fast.

Spanish celebrations are very different to many others around the world. They start Carnival on Thursday, the week before Ash Wednesday, known as Jueves Lardero, which translates to 'Fat Thursday' or Jovelardero and it is known as the 'Day of the Omlette' or Dia de la tortilla. The celebrations vary from town to town, but generally it is a day to clean the pantry of meat and bread and to eat a meal as a community, to celebrate before lent. In both the Castilla-Leon and La Rioja regions young people are excused from school early, then traditionally carry a straw figure representing Judas, and go from house to house, asking for eggs, chorizo or money in order to make a meal. Neighbours sometimes ask the children to sing a short song before giving them the food. Then, the children gather all the ingredients together and prepare a merienda or snack to share.

Newfoundland and Labrador tradition dictates that the final meal before Ash Wednesday consists of pancakes and sausage. However, in addition to this unorthodox combination, many families will also bake gifts into the batter, which are intended to help foretell the future. For instance, finding a coin means that the recipient will be wealthy.

Few celebrations this time of year can top **Mardi Gras in New Orleans**. Taking place on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, it sees Louisiana locals and tourists alike don their finest purple, gold and green costumes, endlessly layering long beads on top. Expect to find festive parades, live music and technicolour parties throughout the city.

When it comes to food, **king cake** is a must. Finding its origins in the biblical story where the three kings brought gifts to baby Jesus, this sweet cinnamony dessert is decorated in themed colours and has a secret **tiny plastic baby** hidden inside. Whoever finds the figure has to bring the cake to the next Mardi Gras party.

Dating back to the 17th century, the Polish referred to the 7 days before Ash Wednesday as '**Fat Week**', enjoying nothing but bacon, vodka and lard-rich dishes. However, the traditions have since been scaled back to just a Fat Thursday now – though the treats are just as enticing. Think fresh pancakes, flaky pastries and jammy doughnuts filling up case lines. However, the most popular and traditional of treats is **Faworki** – a deep-fried, angel wing-shaped dessert topped with powdered sugar.